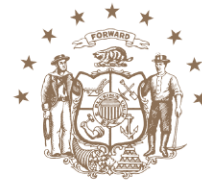




SONDY POPE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
80TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



For Immediate Release
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REP. POPE RESPONSE TO MISGUIDED EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR COLUMN

MADISON – Earlier today, Representative Sondy Pope (D- Cross Plains) the ranking Democrat on the Assembly Committee on Education, issued a statement regarding a recent [column](#) from Committee Chair Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt's (R – Fond du Lac). The piece makes many irresponsible, inaccurate claims and demonstrates a clear misunderstanding of how our public school system functions.

"It is becoming more and more evident that Rep. Thiesfeldt is in over his head as the chair of the Assembly Committee on Education," said Pope. "Wisconsin's founders deemed public education important enough to *require* the legislature to support an equitable system of public schools. Instead of advocating for private schools to get their fair share, Rep. Thiesfeldt should focus on his duties and the document he swore an oath to protect."

The column was written as a response to a recent [column](#) by North Fond du Lac Superintendent Aaron Sadoff that criticized the current Republican-dominated legislature's complete disregard for public schools and their employees. Rep. Thiesfeldt, without evidence, makes the assertion that 2011's Act 10 – which decimated teacher unions - gave school boards new authority. He continues his bogus claims by stating that current accountability initiatives were driven by legislative action. While legislators played a role on the committee that created the school and district accountability system, the effort was led by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the governor, and school leaders across school governance types.

"By his own admission, Rep. Thiesfeldt pointed out that private schools rely on government subsidization to continue their existence. I'm not sure how this fits with his party's general stance on other subsidies like food share and health care," said Rep. Pope. "I think Superintendent Sadoff's point is well-taken: the legislature has enacted enough policy to keep our schools busy for a decade. It's time to focus on investing in our public school kids and let locally elected school boards carry out the will of their communities."

Rep. Thiesfeldt closes his column "correcting" Superintendent Sadoff and ends with a line reading "*Time well-spent on good policy will bear fruit, but bad policy must be rerouted quickly, no matter the time and cost already invested...*"

"This is one area where I am in agreement with Rep. Thiesfeldt, it is just a pity that he cannot yet differentiate good policy from bad policy," concluded Rep. Pope.

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